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ABSTRACT

This article presents a review of literature on topics and theoretical frameworks relevant to the interrelated concerns of student services and freshman retention. The first section identifies information related to the stages, processes, and perspectives from which student service personnel interact with students. A second section focuses on Chickering's Model of Psychosocial Development (A. Chickering, 1993), providing insights into the stages and tasks many undergraduate students experience in their college career. A third and final section presents explanations and applications of two theoretical models relative to retention: Astin's Theory of Student Development (A. Astin, 1985) and Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1975). These complementary models identify and explicitly describe aspects of the institutional environment that link retention to student services. (Author/SLD)

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A Critical Review of the Literature on Student Services and Retention

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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON STUDENT SERVICES AND RETENTION

This article presents a review of literature on topics and theoretical frameworks relevant to the interrelated concerns of student services and freshman retention. The first section identifies information related to the stages, processes, and perspectives from which student service personnel interact with students. A second section on Chickering's Model of Psychosocial Development provides insights into the stages and tasks many undergraduate students experience in their college career. A third and final section presents explanations and applications of two theoretical models relative to retention: Astin's Theory of Student Development and Tinto's Theory of Student Departure. These complimentary models identify variables and explore different factors which impact student persistence and explicitly describe aspects of the institutional environment which link retention to student services.

History of Student Affairs

Information that might assist in an understanding of the rudiments of student services programs is incomplete. However, there are historical accounts which explain central ideologies in American higher education and changing educational curricula which also address the complex interplay between meeting the academic and social needs of college students.

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A review of literature related to the various periods of higher education reveals that student affairs is largely an enterprise of the American University system. Thus, it is useful to examine briefly how student affairs was shaped by early educational models and ever shifting practices. According to Axtell (1974), early American private colleges which date back to the founding of Harvard in 1636 were to a large extent patterned on British prototypes. The American professional educators' responsibilities were two fold (Barna, James, & Knefelkamp, 1978). One goal was to prepare Caucasian male students most of whom came from families of high or middle economic status to maintain their positions in society. The second objective of educators was to contribute positively to the moral and spiritual development of students in their charge. To this end, religion was central to the founding, staffing, and curriculum offerings at the colonial colleges (Rudolph, 1976). By and large the governing boards or trustees, presidents, and staff were in various ways connected to the clergy. Courses were anchored in the liberal arts; Latin and Greek were required languages; and students were most often trained to enter careers in law, medicine or the ministry.

Moreover, and of importance in understanding the development of student services, early American college personnel generally worked from the perspective of in loco parentis Rudolph (1976). Consequently, as the parents away from home, instructors were intimately involved in students' activities outside the formal classroom setting. Although the educational goals and procedures of these early institutions tended to be framed in humanitarian terms, Peterson (1963) observes that it was not uncommon for these custodial functions to be construed as constraining and overly-protective. This practice of faculty providing both academic instructions as well as social and moral guidance remained in favor for over two hundred years and into the 1860s.

By the mid-1860s, two major yet different developments occurred in the American university movement which impacted all aspects of higher education, particularly the perception and evolvement of student affairs. Decisions by the chief

administrators at Harvard in 1869 signaled the beginning of an interest in eliminating responsibilities for students social development from instructors' duties (Boyer, 1987). At this time college presidents were being held increasingly accountable for acquiring financial resources and bolstering the academic reputations of their institutions. Further, a number of American colleges became more committed to applied research and faculty members were encouraged to study at prestigious German universities. As a result of this intellectual exposure some educators began to reinterpret their professional priorities. The practice of faculty giving their greatest attention to students was replaced by one which gave emphasis to personal intellectual growth of teachers, departmental loyalties, and curriculum expansion (Rhatigan, 2000).

The effects of this research initiative are seemingly open to debate. Fenske (1989) states that the emphasis on research resulted in faculty interest and responsibilities connected with students' non-academic affairs becoming ambiguous or even dismissed. In contrast, Thelin (1996) held that although several universities located in urban areas such as Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Chicago pushed for sponsored graduate research, these institutions represented the exception rather than the rule. In fact, he further asserted that none of these institutions could have survived without their income-producing undergraduate programs. In explaining that advance research remained marginal to the more primary purpose of undergraduate education, Thelin stated, "Although the ideals of research and utility were conspicuous, they were tempered to varying degrees by the values traditionally placed upon a liberal education and piety" (pp. 11-12). The undergraduate programs also gained strength and support from a new entity in the college: alumni associations. By 1900, the work of several different constituencies- administrators, teachers, staff, and alumni- resulted in compromises that embraced a variety of academic programs (Rudolph, 1976).

In addition to the aforementioned, the college landscape was changed physically and socially by the increased building of dormitories, the establishing of intercollegiate

and intramural athletics (Goodchild, Arredondo & Glaser, 1997), and the forming of campus organizations and social fraternities and sororities. (Thelin, 1990; Rudolph, 1976). Personnel were needed to work with students in each of these new components of college life; generally these persons included the dean of men, the dean of women, the registrar, and possibly a skeletal staff (Cowley & Williams, 1991). Guidelines were not clear-cut or consistent and policies were varied and shaped by the specific needs of an institution. However, what was clear was that deans, registrars, and activities advisers represented a distinct group from the faculty whose primary purpose was teaching and to a lesser extent scholarly research.

A second significant development in higher education also shaped the evolving practices of student affairs. As a result of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act, predominately White public colleges were established. Additionally, the Morrill Act of 1890 resulted in the establishment of 17 Black land grant colleges all of which were located in southern states and offered full courses of study in agriculture and technology. Educational historians have different opinions on how and when these kinds of institutions exerted their greatest influence. Thelin (2000) gives the dates of 1870 and 1930 as the period of significant impact and held that these institutions were started to meet the demands of the nation's expanding industrial economy by offering programs in agriculture, technology and home economics. Barna, Haws, and Knefelkamp (1978) while acknowledging factors related to the nation's economy makes other pertinent observations as well. More precisely, the establishment of land grant colleges is seen as ushering in a period of meritocracy in American higher education and characterized by the objective of advancing the intellectual growth of well-prepared students regardless of their socioeconomic class. Other changes included an increase in veterans and women students, a modest increase in minority enrollment, lower tuition, and expanded curricula. In addition to these, after World War I and even more so following World War II, practices used by the U.S. Army such as mental testing and counseling techniques were

adopted by colleges. Hence, student affairs personnel were given the responsibilities for implementing these new procedures along with managing student enrollment, student discipline, health service, and job placement programs (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

Since the 1960s, American colleges have been transformed by and responsive to national and international social, political, and economic events. These changes are most apparent in two areas: the physical campus environment and the student profile. To meet the needs of larger enrollments, both private and public campuses have expanded in size and number; this is clearly illustrated in the increased establishment of junior and community colleges (Richardson & Bender, 1987; Diener, 1986; Deegan & Tillery, 1985). Furthermore, the image of the typical college student changed after 1970 (Cross, 1976) to include more adult learners, more ethnic minorities, and more first generation students, many of whom had particular strengths as well as weaknesses. One means of assisting some members of this new college population was provided by the federal government through financial aid programs such as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG) later Pell Grants. Astin (1993) and Arbeiter (1987) affirm that the modifications in financial aid policies from a grants to loan system in some instances caused a decline in enrollments, especially among Black students.

Other characteristics have also been reported concerning the changing profile of students. In the earlier years of this four-decade period, student activism was widespread, particularly with the civil rights movement and Vietnam War protests. In reference to student activism and involvement, Graham and Gisi (2000) are in agreement with Loeb (1994) in affirming that students on today's campuses seek involvement in the college environment but the kind of interaction is different from the involvement of 1970's students. More specifically, in addition to coping with often overlapping issues related to academics, employment, race, sex, and class, today's students must also work to overcome resignations and resistance.

This investigation of related literature clearly shows that over the years, student services has defined and redefined its mission in keeping with the changes in the broader higher education community. The philosophic foundation and image of student affairs personnel as being responsible for enforcing rigid controls and discipline on students' social behavior no longer prevails. As current education researchers (Barr, Desler & Associates, 2000; Beede & Burnett, 1999; Garland & Grace, 1993) stress, the common theme in higher education is on development of the whole student. Responding to this mission, different student affairs organizations have collaborated to make their educational component more effective. Nuss (1996) held that professional associations such as the American Colleges Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) were instrumental in expanding and clarifying the definitions of student affairs and incorporating universal application of professional goals and standards. To this list of organizations should be added the National Association of Personnel Workers (NAPW) which was founded in 1954 because racial segregation prevented African American membership in either ACPA or NASPA. In 1994 NAPW changed its name to the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP) and remains focused on the development of students at private and public Black colleges and universities through the integration of academic and social programs.

Finally, as student affairs became a more integral part of the university system so was there an increased awareness of the need for theoretical models. Prior to the work of Nevitt Sanford (1962, 1966) there were no theoretical constructs which provided coherent insights into college students' development and guided the work of student affairs professionals. Currently, however, educational researcher (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Evans, 1996, Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Moore, 1990; and Knefelkamp, Widick & Parker, 1980) have identified several theory categories which can be applied to different areas of student affairs. These include psychosocial development

theory, cognitive theory, typology theory, student involvement theory and retention theory. The remainder of this chapter will focus on literature related to the three theoretical perspectives which inform this research: Chickering's Psychosocial Development Theory, Astin's Student Involvement Model, and Tinto's Model of Student Departure.

Psychosocial Development Theory

Related literature on psychosocial theory as it applies to college students makes frequent reference to educational researchers' indebtedness to the body of work in personality development advanced by Erik Erikson (Delworth, 1996; Chickering, 1993; Knefelkamp, Widick, & Parker, 1978;). Erikson (1959) engaged in interdisciplinary research to explain the social rather than intellectual dimensions of personality development. In brief, he held that human development occurred in a series of eight linked stages ranging from infancy to the upper ages of adulthood. Each stage has identifying hallmarks: the person's physical stage; the person's encounters with society and the role he or she plays; and the need to order, evaluate, and adapt to the social environment. As Widwick, Parker, & Knefelkamp (1978) explained, Erikson's perspective is essentially positive in that he recognized the adaptive capacities of individuals and focused on factors which encourage the emergence of competence, identity, love, and wisdom in an individual's life.

While Erikson's research provided meaningful insights, it was Nevitt Sanford who argued that behavioral and educational theories should be expanded to meet the specific needs of college students. Moreover, it was Sanford's seminal work The American College: A Psychological and Social Interpretation of the Higher Learning (1962) which first presented theoretical constructs to guide student affairs personnel (Thelin, 1996; Kenfelkamp, Widick & Parker, 1978). His pioneering investigations on the developmental status of entering freshmen included qualitative and statistical descriptions on personality and development and guidelines for policy in higher education. Central to

Sanford's position was the assertion that optimum development takes place when there is differentiation and integration as well as balance of challenge and support. In other words, if the student is not challenged, he or she can become bored and development does not occur; likewise, too much challenge in the absence of support can prove counter productive.

Sandford's early research provided a useful but general framework for studying student development; more detailed and specific analyses utilized by student service personnel are found in the investigation of later researchers. Pre-eminent among student development theorists employing a psychosocial framework is Arthur Chickering (Evans, 1996; Upcraft, 1989). Education and Identity (1969) presented Chickering's Model of Student Development based on his landmark study of undergraduates at thirteen colleges. A revision of this theory (Chickering and Reisser, 1993) incorporated additional research findings from a larger and more diverse student population. The value of Chickering's research is that it provided a specificity and coherence missing in earlier educational studies. Equally significant, as Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp (1978) affirmed, Chickering's philosophical stance is grounded in the fact that he is both a theorist and a practitioner.

Chickering (1969, 1993) synthesized formulations to explain stages of development as well as identify needs of college students. The Chickering conceptual model includes seven vectors or themes each of which has additional components and is explicated in terms of the student's interactions and emerging capabilities within the demands of a college environment. Chickering envisioned the vectors as "major highways" for student's achieving individuation. Movement in any one vector could take place at different rates and vector categories could overlap. Although the Chickering model is not rigidly sequential, certain vectors can be seen as foundational. For instance, the first vector--intellectuals and physical competence--is placed as a prerequisite for vector six which involves acquiring focused vocational goals and developing flexible

strategies for achieving them.

The following section presents explanations of each of Chickering's seven vectors. The vectors form the theoretical foundation of Chickering's Psycholsocial Development Theory and relate to the intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of a college student's development and involvement in the college environment.

Vector One:

Developing Competence. This vector focuses on the task of developing in three areas: intellectual competence, physical competence, and interpersonal competence. Intellectual competence stresses acquisition of subject matter in specific academic programs, gaining cultural, aesthetic and intellectual sophistication in the humanities, philosophy, history, and the performing arts, and developing general intellectual and cognitive skills. Intellectual competence also places emphasis on critical thinking, particularly the development of new frames of reference that integrate points of view. Expanding competence in physical and manual skills is also important in that it involves gaining strength, fitness and self-discipline. Moreover, physical competence can interact with intellectual competence by stimulating an examination of how objects and events can be connected to symbols through action. The third area of competence, interpersonal relations, not only involves the student's skills of effective communication, but also gaining sensitivity to the dynamics of group processes (Chickering 1993, 53-82).

Vector Two:

Managing Emotions. This vector is concerned with the student's developing the ability to become aware of and distinguish between different destructive emotions. Chickering's original theory (1969) focused on only two emotions: aggression and sexual desire. The revised theory (1993) is more reflective of the contemporary college population and considers a full range of emotions, including anxiety, fear, depression,

guilt, aggression, and dysfunctional sexual and romantic attractions and coercions. The corollary task in this vector is for the student to learn self-regulation and modification to appropriate/acceptable behavior while reflecting on the immediate and long-term potential consequences to self and others (Chickering 1993, 83-114).

Vector Three:

Managing Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence. As in the previous vector, this vector has been revised; in the original version (1969) it was titled "Developing Autonomy." The revision (1993) in the title suggests the shift in focus and relates to the student's progression in three interlocking areas: emotional independence, instrumental independence, and interdependence. Emotional independence refers to the student's decreased need for approval and reassurance and increased ability to carry on activities, to cope with problems and to be flexible in evaluating desires and outcomes. On the other hand, instrumental independence involves growth in the ability to organize activities through identifying resources and using systematic problem solving methods. The last stage of this vector is the student's recognizing that he or she does not live in a vacuum and that personal choices are made within a larger physical, social, and historical context (Chickering, 1993, 115-144).

Vector Four:

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships. In the original theory (1969) this was vector number five and titled "Freeing Interpersonal Relationships." This new (1993) placement in sequence speaks to the belief that experiences with relationships contribute significantly to the student's shaping and sense of self. Whereas the sub-category of interpersonal competence as explained in Vector One involves learning to manage oneself and others to achieve a joint or common goal, "Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships" addresses different objectives. In addition to freedom from narcissism and an increased tolerance and or respect for persons with different

backgrounds, values, and habits, there is another key marker for development in this area. Maturing is also reflected in the ability to choose to become involved in nurturing relationships and friendships that can endure differences in opinion and physical distance or separation (Chickering 1993, 145-173).

Vector Five:

Establishing Identity. This vector builds upon the previously listed vectors which are related to competence, emotions, autonomy and interdependence; and mature interpersonal relationships. However, most important, this fifth vector focuses on the student's gaining an inner sense of self. The sub-sets included in achieving identity include the following: (1) comfort with body and appearance, (2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (7) personal stability and integration (Chickering 1993, 173-208).

Vector Six:

Developing Purpose. While students expect a college education to qualify them for a good job and comfortable lifestyle, they lack certain skills required to bring these into reality. The vector of Developing Purpose entails the ability to be intentional, to assess interests and options, to make plans, and to persist in spite of delays or obstacles. Each of these considerations should be applied to three major elements: (1) vocational plans; (2) personal interest; and (3) interpersonal and family commitments. In each of these categories, a frame of reference is provided by the student's values and commitment to a particular belief (Chickering 1993, 209-234).

Vector Seven:

Developing Integrity. This last vector relates to the steps which a student takes during his college career to define a set of values that guide personal actions. These overlapping stages included (1) moving from dualistic and rigid beliefs to more humanizing values; (2) clarifying and affirming personal values while maintaining respect for others' beliefs; and (3) establishing congruence between beliefs and actual behavior.

Applications of Chickering's Psychosocial Developmental Theory

Published findings of attempts to validate Chickering's research have been primarily based on his 1969 developmental vectors model which is Western in its orientation. Prince, Miller and Winston (1974, 1987) reasoned that different vectors could be demonstrated through particular behaviors; therefore, they constructed the Student Development Task Lifestyle Inventory (SDTL). This instrument has 140 items and measures in behavioral terms progression along three vectors: developing autonomy, developing interpersonal relationships, and developing purpose.

Additionally, other researchers have sought to expand and test the applicability of Chickering's global model to specific college populations. Most subsequent investigators recognize the usefulness and support Chickering's broad vector designations and sub-categories. Nevertheless, in some instances conclusions differ relative to influencing factors and sequence of movement in achieving certain developmental tasks. These kinds of research address the need to examine and clarify different patterns of psychosocial development as they operate across different cultures, as well as within cultures. The following examples are representative of the diverse categories in which Chickering's vector classifications have been tested: gender related factors and psychosocial development (Greeley & Tinsley, 1988); ethnic and cultural-related factors and psychosocial development (Jordon-Cox, 1987); and sexual orientation-related factors and psychosocial development (D'Augelli, 1994).

In expanding his 1969 model, Chickering incorporated findings of other researchers as well as updated conclusions from his own investigations. The more inclusive 1993 revision describes the hallmarks of psychosocial development, the means of measuring it, and methods of fostering it. Each of these components can be utilized by student services personnel to better understand student's intellectual, social, and emotional needs and implement institutional arrangements that promote student retention.

Astin's Student Involvement Theory

In contrast to psychosocial development a second area of scholarship pertinent to this research is student involvement theory. A review of literature (Kuh, 2000; Cuyjet, 1996) indicates that the most widely recognized researcher in student involvement theory is Arthur W. Astin whose theoretical formulations have evolved over three decades and have been conducted in different kinds of college environments. In explaining both the focus and direction of his research, Astin (1985) asserted, "The effectiveness of any

educational policy is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement" (136).

Astin (1985) defined student involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to an academic experience. To be more specific, the involved student is described as expending considerable energy in studying and interacting with faculty, school personnel, and other students. Thus, involvement does not simply mean holding membership in organizations or attending extracurricular activities. Astin held that in some respects his involvement theory resembles Freud's cathexis. Freud posited that individuals invest psychological energy in objects outside of themselves, including their families, friends, jobs, and activities; likewise, student involvement addressed these same kinds of relationships.

Astin also postulated that the concept of involvement is similar to what learning theorists associate with "vigilance," or "time on task," or "effort." Each of these terms while partially relevant is much narrower in its implications. The psychological construct which student involvement most closely resembled is "motivation," yet, here too, there are marked differences in meaning. Astin preferred the term involvement because it connotes something more than a psychological or internal state; involvement places emphasis on the behavioral manifestation of a psychological state. Equally important from his research perspective, involvement is more open to direct observation and measurement than the abstract psychological construct of motivation. Moreover, fundamental to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement is the emphasis placed on student time as a major resource. That is, Astin stated mere exposure to an educational environment without active participation on the student's part will thwart the learning and developmental process.

It is from this perspective that Astin concentrated not so much on the interior aspect of what an individual thinks or feels but on the behavioral aspects of what he or she actually does. Astin's involvement theory is comprised of five postulates:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects which may be either highly generalized or highly specific.

2. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum. Different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student may exhibit different levels of involvement with different objects at different times. With involvement being interpreted as taking place along a continuum, the act of dropping out of school becomes the ultimate form of non-involvement.

3. Involvement has both qualitative and quantitative features.

4. Outcomes in student learning and development are directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement.

5. The overall effectiveness of any educational policy or curriculum is directly related to student involvement.

A thorough examination of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement reveals that it is based on his systematic investigations of several different kinds of experience which promote student success. Astin (1975) identified factors in the college environment that significantly affect persistence in college; Astin (1985) focused on student involvement as the key to an effective education; and Astin (1993) expanded on his previous research and presented an elaborate design of 135 college environmental measures and 57 student involvement measures. This Input--Environmental--Outcome (IEO) model. *Input* refers to the characteristics of the student at the time of initial entry to the institution; *environmental* refers to the various programs, policies, faculty, peer and educational experiences to which the student is exposed; and *outcomes* designate student characteristics after exposure. 1993, 7-16).

The following section presents information pertaining to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement that have implications for student affairs.

1. Effects of Place of Residence. From 1977 through 1993, Astin's findings pertaining to student residence have been consistent. Attending a small, often single gender private college was found to provide the greatest opportunities for student involvement and participation (Astin, 1977). Living on campus was further positively associated with satisfaction with college experience and retention. This pattern was observed among all categories of students regardless of sex, race, academic ability, or family background. Unlike commuter students, residential students exhibited greater involvement and attachment to undergraduate life. Living in a dormitory was also positively associated with interaction with faculty and support services, participation in organizations and social fraternities and sororities, and achievement of leadership in organizations and athletics. Astin (1993) reported a high positive correlation between on-campus housing and satisfaction with faculty, attainment of the bachelor's degree, and willingness to re-enroll in the same institution for advance study.

2. Effects of Academic Pursuits. Being academically involved is defined as the extent to which the students work hard at their studies, the number of hours spent in course preparation, good study habits and interest in their courses. An extensive involvement in academic pursuits had an interesting pattern of effects. Students who were heavily involved in academics were less likely than average students to show changes in personality and behavior that normally result from college attendance. Equally significant, being academically involved was strongly related to satisfaction with all aspects of college life except friendship with other students. Yet this was balanced by the satisfaction which resulted from the recognition and rewards given for academic excellence. More than any other institutional characteristic, frequent interaction with faculty was related to student satisfaction with college.

3. Effects of Employment. Astin (1975, 1993) reported that a student's chances of graduating from college were significantly influenced by the type and extent of involvement in employment. Full-time employment had uniformly negative outcomes as

did holding a part-time job off campus. Students with off-campus jobs were more likely to drop out of school if their work was related to career goals. In addition to the negative effect on degree completion, working had a negative effect on other outcomes as well, including GPA, college satisfaction, willingness to re-enroll in college and growth in cultural awareness. However, holding a job on campus was positively associated with attainment of a bachelor's degree. As compared with students who worked off-campus, students who were employed on campus had the possibility of more frequent contact with other students, faculty, and staff as well as a greater degree of immersion in the college environment.

4. Effects of Financial Aid. While different forms of student aid did effect retention, the changing requirements and increasing complexity of the financial aid process resulted in contradictory findings. Astin (1975) supported the argument that student retention was enhanced by scholarships and work-study programs. Grants were also associated with a small increase in persistence rates. The amount of grant support appeared to be a major factor in student persistence among African American students. Participation in federal work-study programs was reported as enhancing student persistence among African-American and non-African American women students. In general, any form of aid appeared to be most effective when it was not combined with other kinds of assistance. This was particularly true of work-study programs that tended to loose their beneficial impact when combined with grants or loans. Surprisingly, Astin's most recent investigations (1993) did not support his earlier findings. He reported that "State assistance and practically every form of federal aid (Pell grants, Perkins loans, work-study, SEOGs, and Stafford Guaranteed Student Loans) have no discernible effect on student development" (368). No explanation is provided for this finding. Institutionally-based scholarship continued to be reported as having a direct effect on college GPA and graduating with honors. Likewise, receiving aid based on

"special talent," such as athletic or artistic ability, had a positive effect.

5. Effects of Interactions with Student Peers. This broad category of involvement included items such as discussion on class content with other students, working on class projects, tutoring other students, participating in intramural sports, student clubs, organizations, social fraternities and sororities. A pervasive pattern of positive benefits and overall college satisfaction were associated with frequent student interactions. Among the self-reported changes correlated with student-student interaction were growth in the following areas: leadership abilities, interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and general knowledge (Astin 1985, 1993).

6. Effects of Counseling. Student involvement with counseling was measured in two categories: career counseling and personal or psychological counseling. The effects of each were markedly different (1993). Career counseling which included tutoring services, other academic assistance, academic advisement, and job placement was associated with self-reported student growth and high satisfaction. Career counseling was also positively associated with several behavioral outcomes such as being elected to student office and tutoring other students. In contrast, receiving psychological counseling was not associated with satisfaction. In fact, Astin (1993) concluded "it...has a significant effect on feeling overwhelmed and a substantial negative effect on self-rated emotional health" (392). A note of caution is warranted here: feelings of being depressed and overwhelmed may have been the antecedent causes of seeking psychological counseling, rather than the effects of such counseling.

Applications of Astin's Theory of Student Involvement

Astin's Theory of Student Involvement has been the subject of numerous empirical studies. In their monumental study How College Affects Students: Findings from Twenty Years of Research (1991), Pascarella and Terenzini provided a substantial

body of evidence that supports Astin's position that a critical factor in student retention and achievement is the quality of effort that students themselves invest in an institution's resources. Based on their own empirical studies as well as other researchers' findings of how various college experiences influence students' development, Pascarella and Terenzini offered the following assessment: "One of the most inescapable conclusions we can make is that the impact of college is largely determined by the individual's quality of effort and level of involvement in both academic and nonacademic activities" (610). Another support for Astin's scheme which is presented from a different vantage point was given by Kuh, Schuh, Witt and Associates (1991) who engaged in a year-long qualitative study of fourteen 4-year colleges and universities. The results of this collaborative effort were published in Involving Colleges (1991) and provided a framework which could be used by educators, student personnel services, and administrators. This team of investigators gave full acknowledgment of the necessity for colleges to have strong academic programs and financial resources, but they also asserted that "...the critical issue regarding campus environment and student involvement is...creating a sense of belonging...on the part of the students that the institution acknowledges that human needs of social and psychological comfort and that they are valued members of the campus community" (321). While the two above statements lend support to Astin's assumptions in a broader context, other findings confirm specific components of Astin's theory of Student Involvement.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) have examined Astin's position on the impact of school size on student interaction. Similar to Astin, they reported that feelings of isolation and anonymity were commonly found in institutions with large enrollments and that this significantly worked against student involvement. But, by contrast, as the size of institutions decreased, students interpreted the settings as more psychologically manageable and social involvement was enhanced.

Other findings have referred to the correlation between student involvement and general intellectual growth. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) affirmed the positive role of out-of-classroom intellectual exchanges and exposure, including those found in informal discussions and debates. Consequently, these researchers held, "...in some areas of intellectual development, such as critical thinking... it is the breadth of involvement in the intellectual and social expertise of the college...that counts most" (626).

In reference to formal scholastic achievement, one of the most widely tested components of Astin's Theory of Involvement is the impact of students' place of residence. However, research findings on the cognitive effects of living on-campus versus residing off-campus have been inconclusive. For example, Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, Zusman, Inman and Desler (1993) tested the hypothesis that students living on campus would demonstrate greater freshman year gains than similar students who commuted to college. The setting for this study was a large urban research 1 university where the majority of the students lived off-campus. The students who lived on-campus resided in the same residential facility and used the same study and recreational spaces. The study sample involved 210 incoming freshmen. After controlling for pre-college cognitive level, academic motivation, age, work responsibilities, and number of freshman year credit hours undertaken, findings suggested that living on-campus enhanced students' cognitive and intellectual growth.

Another study by Inman and Pascarella (1998) explored aspects of various involvement measures associated with critical thinking. Data were taken from six large urban institutions and represented 326 residential and 316 commuter students. Contrary to prior findings, this research did not establish significant differences in the end-of-year gains between the two groups. A caveat relative to the data focused on the institutions used in the survey. Although the sample was fairly evenly distributed between residential and commuter students, each of the six institutions had large commuter populations. For this reason, it was hypothesized that each institution had in place academic and co-

curricular programs specifically designed to meet commuter students' needs.

A third and more recent three-year longitudinal study of 172 African American students (Flowers & Pascarella, 1999) again pointed to the positive effects of living in on-campus housing. Irrespective of individual background differentials, college racial composition and student body academic ability, living on campus greatly improved third-year thinking and reading comprehension ability.

Other investigations of student involvement and place of residence focus on students' acquisition of social maturity. Astin's research showed that on-campus living significantly assisted in students' social development. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) further confirmed this by reporting that on-campus living promoted increased personal autonomy and political liberation and advanced support for civil liberties. Moreover, Astin posited that commuters, unlike residential students, were more inclined to experience feelings of being overwhelmed or depressed. This is in line with another comparative study (Wilson, Anderson & Fleming, 1987) which concluded that commuter students had more maladjustments. With reference to more specific behavioral patterns, commuters versus residence hall students demonstrated less basic trust, limited participation in organized group activities with peers, and more resistance to breaking ties of family dependence.

One final example which reflected the expansion and usefulness of Astin's Student Involvement Theory is an instrument used to measure involvement designed by Pace and Kuh (1998). The College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) was formulated to provide insights into student effort devoted to various learning activities and includes 10 scales that represent students' perceptions of involvement, learning, and personal development.

Tinto's Model of Student Departure

Tinto's (1975) Model of Student Departure is based on the first theoretical model

of the dropout process advanced by Spady (1970) who took Durkheim's (1961) hypothesis of suicide and applied it to student attrition. Briefly stated, Durkheim held that shared group values and, support of friends reduce the probability of suicide and that people commit suicide when they can not successfully integrate into society. Similarly, Spady's educational model of the college dropout process was based on cause-effect relationships. In addition to identifying characteristics such as family background, economic status, ability, and academic performance as elements which effect dropout decisions, he also included the college specific variables of grade performance and intellectual development. Further, similar to Durkheim, Spady's model also identified common group values and friendship as means of achieving social integration which is critical to success in college. This chain reaction was explicated as follows: it is social integration which leads to student satisfaction; this in turn brings about increased institutional commitment; and greater institutional commitment decreases the probability of the student's dropping out of college.

Building on Spady's work, Tinto (1975) developed a construct of student departure in which he distinguished among voluntary dropouts, academic failures, temporary withdrawers, and intercollegiate transfers. In the first part of his model, Tinto held that attrition was a longitudinal process in which the initial commitment to a particular institution and graduation are influenced directly or indirectly by pre-entry factors. His list was more inclusive than Spady's and involved the student's sex, race, family and financial backgrounds, secondary school achievement, scholastic aptitude, and prior disappointments and achievements. Moreover, these traits were viewed as reliable predictors of the student's future scholastic performance and adaptive capacity to become integrated into the institution's academic and social systems. The second part of his 1975 theoretical model related to the student's actual institutional experience and indicated the determining variables as grade performance, intellectual development, and interactions with faculty, staff, and peers. The more frequent and the more rewarding these contacts

are perceived to be by the student, the greater the subsequent persistence, identification with the institution, and commitment to the goal of graduation.

Tinto (1987) expanded his 1975 theory and incorporated ideas from Durkheim's theory of suicide and the Dutch social anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep's research on rites of passage to adulthood. In reference to the latter, Van Gennep posited that life is comprised of a series of passages from birth to death and involved movement from one status or group to another. In his classic The Rites of Passage (1960), Van Gennep submitted that there are three stages that mark an individual's movement from youth to adult membership in society: separation, transition, and incorporation. The first stage -- separation -- can be recognized by a decline in interaction between an individual and the group from whom he is separating. This stage is often marked by ceremonies that indicate certain behaviors are no longer appropriate. The second stage -- transition -- involves the person's interacting in new ways with individuals in the new group into which he seeks membership. Tests, feats, ordeals, isolations, and training occur at this point to ensure separation from the former group and readiness for the new group. The third phase -- incorporation -- entails the individual's interacting and taking on responsibilities associated with competent membership in the new group.

Tinto's (1987) theoretical formulation has two distinctive but complimentary aspects. First, he drew parallels between the rites of passages into adulthood outlined by Van Gennep and the entering freshmen's stages of adjustment to college. Additionally the first part of the expanded model identified these various stages of integration. The initial step in a college student's career is that of separation which often starts as an anticipatory process as the student prepares to leave home for college and continues when the student is removed from parents, friends, associates, membership in institutions and, in some cases, residence. The second stage of transition places the student in the position of acquiring new ideas, values, and patterns of behavior appropriate to the new college community. The student's previously acquired social and intellectual skills along with

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personal goals and intentions determine the ease with which transitions are made. The final stage of incorporation involves the student becoming integrated into the institutional environment. Unlike the incorporation stage described in Van Gennep's anthropological model, college students in the incorporation stage rarely have structured rituals and ceremonies that provide guidelines. Equally important, while the separation, transformation and incorporation stages each occur early in the college student's career, the incorporation phase is also an ongoing process in which the student is most often left to make his or her way in the institutional environment. Most students, especially freshmen, do not have the adaptive skills to manage the complexities of college life effectively. Thus, Tinto offered the following warning: "Without external assistance, many [students] will eventually leave the institution because they have been unable to establish competent intellectual and social membership in the communities of the college" (99).

Tinto stated that before others attempt to apply his Model of Student Departure in an institutional setting it is necessary to understand certain key ideas. The following section presents excerpts from what Tinto establishes as the core of his philosophic stance on retention research:

1. The model takes seriously the ethnomethodological proposition that what one thinks is real [and] has real consequences. The mere occurrence of interactions between the individual and others within the institution need not ensure that integration occurs -- that depends on the character of those interactions and the manner in which the individual comes to perceive them as regarding or unrewarding. Thus the term *membership* may be taken as connoting the perception on the individual of having become a competent member of an academic or social community within the college. Therefore, no study of the roots of student departure is complete without reference to student perceptions (127).

2. The model is an interactional systems interpretation of an individual's leaving. It recognizes the fact that the individual and the institution as represented by other members of its communities are continually in interaction with one another in a variety of formal and informal situations. Both play an important part in the process of departure (127).

3. The model takes seriously the notion that both forms of integration, social and intellectual, are essential to student persistence. Though it is conceivable that persistence can occur when only one is present, evidence suggests that persistence is greatly enhanced when both forms of personal integration occur (128).

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It should be observed that [this] model of institutional departure... suggests ways in which diverse forms of social and intellectual involvement may be generated on campus for different types of students (128).

Hence, from this philosophical stance, the second part of Tinto's (1987) study of student departure focused on the integration process and specifically on those institutional components that facilitate the student's academic and social integration. Tinto's descriptions of terms are both straight forward and inclusive: academic integration is defined as the full range of individual experiences which take place in the formal and informal domains of the university. In like manner, social integration refers to the formal social systems of the college such as extracurricular activities and also informal day-to-day interactions with different members of the institution.

One primary contribution of Tinto's 1987 college retention theory is that it provides insights into the stages and sources which impact student persistence. The following section provides summaries of what Tinto identified as crucial as well as areas in which institutional action via student affairs can be particularly effective in the longitudinal process of retention.

Enrollment Management

The first stage in the retention process is the student's initial contact with the university through activities related to enrollment management such as application and admission to the institution. It is essential that the information dispensed by enrollment management personnel regarding different kinds of programs and the range of social life be honest and realistic. Painting a glowing picture of an institution can possibly increase enrollments initially, but it can also promote unrealistic expectations, later disappointments, and often subsequent withdrawal from school. Catalogs, brochures, and application materials are typical sources used to provide information; yet high school newspapers, teacher organizations and publications, informed representatives at college fairs, and alumni associations can also be effectively utilized to present an image of an

institution. Thus, through accurate pre-entry information aimed at the needs of prospective students, enrollment management can be an effective tool in reducing voluntary student departure.

Orientation Programs

Another significant early contact program in the integration and retention process involves orientation procedures. Most orientation programs seek to provide entering freshmen with information. Yet these programs often give an incomplete picture of the intellectual and social communities that exist on campus. It is during this foundational period that new students should be informed on how to establish personal contacts with individuals who can provide assistance. Furthermore, effective interaction goes beyond simply providing information but goes further and involves bringing in upperclassmen, faculty, and staff to meet with new students.

Counseling and Advisory Programs

The utilization of counseling and advising programs early in the freshman year is another means of promoting integration into the college environment and student persistence. What is critical here is not just that services are available but the manner in which they are perceived. Advising and counseling services are more accepted as integral and positive when all students participate, not only students who are experiencing difficulty. Moreover, effective counseling and advisory programs are linked to other student service activities. One category of integrated first-year activity involves rituals and ceremonies which can assist students in establishing commonly held values and in making personal linkages to the college community. A second application of integrated first-year academic program is the use of the core courses which cover a wide range of social and intellectual issues rather than required courses in discrete disciplines.

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Financial Assistance Programs

Tinto's findings support other research in affirming that short-term financial problems can cause students to withdraw temporarily or permanently and that financial aid can, in some cases, helps student overcome difficulties. However, Tinto asserts that all forms of financial assistance do not work equally well. For instance, on-campus work-study is seen as preferable to direct financial aid. Surprisingly, Tinto asserted that financial issues are of secondary rather than primary significance in the retention process. Tinto offered the following statement as support for his position:

> For most students, persistence is more reflective of the character of their social and intellectual experiences on campus than it is of their financial resources.

This does not mean that some students, especially those from less advantaged backgrounds, may not require or need financial assistance. Rather it suggests that individual response to financial stress is conditioned by other forces, namely those associated with the interactive character of student life on campus. The more rewarding student life is perceived to be, the greater, generally speaking, will be the person's willingness to withstand even great financial hardship. Conversely, unrewarding experiences in the academic and/or social communities of the college may lead students to withdraw in the face of even quite minimal financial stress. The citation of financial stress as a reason for withdrawal is sometimes a polite way of describing one's displeasure with the character of one's social and/or intellectual life within the institution (158).

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Applications of Tinto's Model of Student Persistence

A number of investigators have tested the validity of Tinto's theory in various settings and have obtained results consistent with Tinto's findings. Chickering (1993), similar to Tinto, held that the retention process should be started as early as possible in the student's college career. Among the cluster of responsibilities Chickering delegated to student services were those involving recruitment, pre-admissions, admissions, academic skills assessment, and registration. Further, Chickering was in agreement with Tinto that admissions counseling should set in motion the sequential steps for increasing student's self-reliance by involving both students and parents/guardians. Further, providing both parents and students with the same information can assist in establishing clarity about the physical environment of the college, services available, and procedures.

Pascarella and Chapman (1983) tested the validity of Tinto's predictive theory of the persistence/departure process on a sample population of 2,326 freshman enrolled in one of four types of institutions: residential universities, liberal arts colleges, two-year commuter institutions, and four-year commuter institutions. The findings parallel Tinto's results in several respects. The pattern of freshman persisters being more involved in the social aspects of the institution than voluntary withdrawals was most pronounced at residential and liberal arts institutions. With background traits held constant, residential university persisters were more likely to live on campus, to spend more weekends on campus, and to be more involved in social activities with their peers. A different pattern emerged with the two-year commuter sample: both withdrawals and persisters had significantly less contact with faculty and students. The interpretation was given that withdrawal from two-year colleges is sometimes a matter of transfer to a traditional four-year institution rather than the result of low levels of academic and social involvement.

Galicki and McEwen (1989) conducted a study of persistence rates of Black and

White undergraduate students at one large institution, the University of Maryland at College Park. The four-year study measured persistence for eight consecutive fall-spring semesters. This comparative study supported Tinto's theory that residential students have a higher rate of persistence. The following results were among Galicki and McEwen's findings: African American commuters had the lowest persistence rate (45%) followed by White commuters (60%), African American residence students (70.4%), and White residence students (80.6%). Additionally most African American students who were dismissed for academic reasons were commuters.

Beil, Reisen, Zea, and Caplan (1999) conducted a longitudinal study to predict retention from a sample of first-year students at a predominately White, residential, private research university. Participants were 512 residential students whose median age was 18; the sample consisted of 60% females and 40% males; the ethnic composition was 70% White, 13% Asian American, 8% African American, and 3% Latino. A self-report questionnaire was the instrument used in the procedure. Findings support Tinto's theory in part: that is academic and social integration indirectly rather directly effect retention. More precisely, this study demonstrated that a student's academic and social interaction influences level of commitment to the institution, and ultimately it is commitment that impacts retention.

Researchers have also used Tinto's theory to test the correlations between persistence and pre-college academic preparation. Fox (1986) applied the conceptual model developed by Tinto to a group of academically underprepared students who were admitted to a special program at the City University of New York, a four-year commuter institution. The study showed that the Tinto model was sensitive to characteristics involving student-institution fit operative in this setting. Fox verified that the Tinto framework was useful in providing clear prescriptions for collecting data and for analyzing results of the student disengagement process. Results showed that with this particular student sample, academic integration was more significant than social

integration. Fox offered two explanations for his findings. First, the majority of these students were enrolled in required remedial and/or developmental instruction in reading, writing, and/or mathematics. Additionally, they were given supplemental academic and personal counseling and tutoring. Second, this urban institution had a limited capacity to provide commuting students sufficient opportunities for social interaction. Fox strongly suggested that a sample taken in a residential university setting would show a higher correlation between academic and social variables in student persistence.

Finally, another different kind of validity testing of Tinto's theory involved comparing it with other models of college persistence. A comparative investigation of Tinto's Student Integration Model with Bean's Student Attrition Model (Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora & Hengstler, 1992) concluded that both theorists were correct in assuming that college persistence was the product of a complex set of interactions between personal and institutional factors and that the intent to persist was the outcome of a successful match between the student and the institution. However, Tinto's Student Integration Model was found more statistically applicable than Bean's Model of Student Departure in terms of the number of hypotheses validated. Almost 70% of the Student Integration hypotheses were confirmed compared to 40% of the hypotheses of the Student Attrition Model.

Summary

Virtually all universities are committed to expending human and financial resources to increase student retention. More complete knowledge of how student services can be effectively utilized in meeting this institutional goal can be obtained through studying different theoretical formulations. A thorough examination of theoretical constructs as well as related literature indicate the complexity of retention is best understood through a consideration of students' perceptions and behaviors as well as institutional characteristics.

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